

THE EDINBURGH

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THE MAGAZINE FOR THE EDINBURGH JEWISH COMMUNITY



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'In loving memory of the late Bella (Gordon) Cohen, with affection from her nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great nephews'

Maryla and Edward Green have kindly defrayed the cost of postage within Britain for this edition of the 'Edinburgh Star'.

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From the Editor

Religious rights, gender rights, human rights. Political correctness has gone mad. Ours is a democracy bending over backwards to try to please everyone. Britain has its own culture and traditions based on Christian values. Over the last

century she has gradually become more and more able to appreciate and rejoice in cultural differences. So why is there such escalation in political correctness? It is for fear of appearing to be racist, sexist and, dare I say it, fascist.

There are so many inconsistencies in both government recommendations and public expectations. In view of escalating threats of terrorism, the public demands the protection of the law, but despite that, many are reluctant to have identity cards because that would be an infringement of rights. And as if in acquiescence, police authorities granted the right of anonymity to two escaped convicted murderers, regardless of the obvious risk to public safety.

So what do the authorities propose to be the best way to determine who will be welcome in Britain? They consider that taking 'Citizenship exams' will solve all the problems. Surely a basic declaration of allegiance to the host country should be of paramount importance. If the basic essence of a country cannot be accepted, then what reason is there to remain in such disagreeable circumstances? Jews have successfully integrated into their host society without having had to compromise their traditions and beliefs. Often the target of stereotypical remarks, they would never resort to strong-arm tactics such as curses, death threats or a desire to convert a whole nation to their way of thinking. The recent production of Shakespeare's most controversial play, 'The Merchant of Venice', with its insensitive promotion, was vociferously and widely discussed, but nothing more than debate occurred. What might have been potentially explosive to a minority of volatile Muslims, not truly representative of their community, as illustrated by the case of the controversial cartoon in Holland, has been diffused, because Jews ultimately do not rejoice in being

victims. Sharon Thompson writes most sensitively about the play, with its resulting backlash, from a non-Jewish perspective.

And in Israel, who is in control, the government or the religious fanatics? Gay parades, having been sanctioned by the Israeli authorities in the most provocative of locations, never did take place; this, ultimately because of overwhelming pressure by Charedi protesters who, having received obscene and violent threats, started fires in response. All that was needed was a little sensitivity on the part of the marchers, a little common sense by the authorities and a little tolerance by the ultra Orthodox.

But it is deeply worrying when politics and religion are allowed to become entangled. It appears that the same Rabbi Shlomo Amar who cancelled the conference in Israel, to discuss the question of 'aguna', is now attempting to revise the law of 'Right of return' to exclude converts. These people could find themselves in as much danger of persecution in their native countries as any born Jew.

In Britain integration is the buzzword. To accelerate the process, proposals have been put forward for faith schools to allocate 25% of their places to other faith or no-faith pupils. If this action will have the effect of a higher degree of understanding towards different cultures and subsequent tolerance, then it is a laudable proposal. It is important to conserve our multi-cultural society, and is preferable to resorting to total secularism,

dangerously near in non-faith schools.

Members of the PC lobby, anticipating that Christmas celebrations might cause offence to other ethnic groups, proposed an embargo on such events in the work place. Yet no Jewish, Muslim, Hindu or any other religious group has ever officially objected to this British tradition. Does the PC lobby intend to hide all other expressions of faith? If so, assimilation, and not just integration appears to be their agenda. The result would be a religious mule; neither one thing nor the other. And how much poorer would our society be for this.

Putting the world to rights is a never-ending occupation and politics are never very far away from the Jewish psyche. Now that Scottish elections are on the horizon it only seemed right to find out what politicians feel regarding the Jewish community within this constituency. We were fortunate that three of our local MEPs were not just willing, but happy to pen some interesting thoughts and observations about their connection with Jewish issues.

Israel is never far from our thoughts and Maurice Naftalin reflects this in a most thought-provoking piece written in response to the section in the last issue, which dealt with Middle East problems. He particularly cites Tal Gilad's 'War of the innocent' as the catalyst. On a less sobering subject, Eric Milligan writes on Israel's cultural front, and Maurice Griffin on discovering the joy of Shabbat by the Kotel.

To offset the serious nature of this particular edition, we have at last been able to use the writing talents of our younger community members. Although the concepts too are serious, they add a lighter, youthful flavour to a magazine that has been predominantly represented by maturity.

I hope you will take pleasure in reading these and the regular articles comprising community activities, Society reports and finally, exploration into new literature.

Judy Gilbert

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Scottish Elections; Jewish Connections

Mike Pringle

Liberal Democrats MSP
for Edinburgh South (MEP)



It is an honour to be asked to write this short piece for the Edinburgh Star magazine. As MSP for South Edinburgh I am aware of the large Jewish community that resides in the southside of the city and I have visited the synagogue on Salisbury Road to meet members of the congregation there. South Edinburgh's long Jewish heritage is also evident from the small cemetery on Sciennes House Place. It was the first Jewish cemetery in Scotland and when this was full the community used a plot at Newington Cemetery. But this long history has not always been a happy one. I, like many in the local community, shared your readers' sense of outrage at the anti-semitic vandalism that occurred there some years ago. I believe that this was a one-off incident but it only goes to highlight the prejudices that can lie beneath the surface of some people. We must work hard to eradicate this.

As the MSP for South Edinburgh I seek to treat everyone with fairness and equality and to give everyone the best service I can. I want to represent everyone's views and I have been involved in a number of issues which pertain to the Jewish Community. The first is a Scottish issue and concerns the competency of courts to take Jewish divorces into account when deciding a civil divorce settlement. I currently serve on the Scottish Parliament Justice 1 committee and was involved in the scrutiny of legislation to reform family law. Members of the Jewish community had serious concerns about the difficulty that is experienced by some Scottish families who are going through a divorce but for whom there is a religious impediment to remarrying.

The issue was raised by Ken Mackintosh, the MSP for Eastwood in Renfrewshire. His constituency has the highest percentage of Jewish residents in Scotland and the Liberal Democrats supported his concerns. The problem that his amendment addressed was essentially that, although a Jewish religious marriage is recognised by the courts and by civil law in this country, there is no reciprocal mechanism for a civil divorce to include or even refer to the need for a religious divorce. The result for some Jewish families is that former partners—usually men—have used the on-going relationship to exercise control over their former spouses, preventing them from getting remarried, gaining access to children and, in some cases, even renegotiating property rights that were agreed in the original divorce settlement. This was an unhappy state of affairs. What was important to me, in this circumstance, were the best interests of the family and the children.

I was not aware at the time why the matter of Jewish religious divorce could not be addressed by the Jewish religious authorities. Quite simply, it is because there is no mechanism to do so. Ken Mackintosh told the committee that some 300 years ago, the dispersed Jewish communities throughout Europe and elsewhere decided to adopt the secular law of the societies in which they lived. In effect, they gave up the right to amend their own law. The traditionally low level of divorce in Jewish communities—lower than is experienced in societies generally—meant that that was not a problem until recently when, like communities generally, Jewish families have experienced a rise in divorce rates.

I would be the first to admit that I am not a religious person. My world view is based on the principles of peace, fairness, honesty and integrity. I, like many non-religious people, am usually uncomfortable with the principle of civil procedures becoming intertwined with religious law. Ken Macintosh told the committee that what was being proposed was simply to build a step into the civil divorce process so that religious divorce can be considered alongside other matters, such as access to children or property rights, in an effort to make it easier to secure a fair settlement. I believe it is right that minority groups should have their interests specially considered as long as the general principles of equality and fairness are upheld.

We already recognise and legislate for the needs of many different religious communities, through education legislation, the Race Relations Act 1976 and employment law, to name but a few areas of law. Perhaps most important of all is the Marriage (Scotland) Act 1977, specifically catering for Jewish and other religious marriages. What the Parliament was doing in practice was improving the process by which some Scottish families reach a divorce and agree a fair and just settlement. By including the consideration of Jewish divorces the bill was simply reflecting family life today. I believe the Family Law Act improved people's lives and I was pleased to support it. The second aspect of policy that I have been lobbied strongly on is obviously aspects surrounding the Middle East Peace process. Although international issues are a matter for the House of Commons it is something which I feel very strongly about and which constituents are also concerned about. For many years I have been a member of an International Peace Organisation called SERVAS and have a long held view that war must be avoided at all costs and that it is simply a failure of both sides in a conflict to talk to each other. This might seem idealistic and it is to an extent, but it is this that shapes my view of the Middle East Peace process. I do not want to see suicide attacks on Israel but nor do I want to see the occupation of the West Bank. In the course of my work I have come under criticism from members of the Jewish community for supporting Parliamentary motions congratulating Mordechai Vanunu on his election as rector of Glasgow University or calling on the Scottish Parliament to have a representative of the Palestinian people come and speak to it. But I have also been criticised by other groups for

not condemning companies operating in Israel and not calling for boycotts of Israel.

I believe that condemnation should be reserved for acts of violence and aggression on both sides. People need to talk to one another and respect each other's position. This can be hard when one side wants to sweep Israel into the sea and the other is occupying land the Palestinians believe to be theirs. I would greatly appreciate hearing from members of the Jewish community in South Edinburgh with their views on the

current position of the Middle East peace process. This would certainly be taken on board and would be valued by Liberal Democrats as we move into the future when our attention must be more focussed on Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Being an MSP is not an easy job. Everyone including myself has an opinion and a view on an issue. It is hard to get the balance right, but I believe that minority groups such as Edinburgh's Jewish community needs to have their voice heard. I would encourage you to contact your own MSPs and MPs. We are always willing to listen.

Donald Anderson

Labour MSP for Edinburgh South (MEP)



As a youngster growing up in Edinburgh, I have to say I had very little awareness of the Jewish Community in Edinburgh. Indeed, I mentioned to Rabbi David Rose at our last meeting, that as a child I regularly walked along Salisbury Place to go to and from the Royal Commonwealth Pool, and that I had no idea there was a synagogue there, nor had I much knowledge of the Jewish faith itself. My primary school shared a building with St John Vianney Primary, which gave an insight into how people from different faiths can successfully co-exist.

My experience then, as now, leads me to believe that the vast majority of us are good, decent hard working people, who have broadly the same loves and ambitions. My experience when campaigning in the South of the city, led me to become ever more active in my party. As someone who grew up in a council house, I was shocked to see the lives of others scarred by their living conditions. I lived in a palace compared to some families who lived in damp-ridden, cold and draughty housing.

As a councillor, and as Council Leader for more than seven years, my abiding memories are of a city increasingly at peace with itself. Prosperity, and living

conditions have improved immeasurably. People are often surprised when I tell them that under the Conservatives unemployment in Morningside was higher than it is today in Craigmillar. Indeed, during the 1980's recession, it was nearly 50% higher than it is now in Craigmillar.

We have come a long way economically with over 50,000 jobs created in a decade in Edinburgh. More so, however, we have come a long way socially as well. Huge changes in Edinburgh's population have taken place. About a quarter of the population of our city were born outside Scotland. We have a diverse and rich ethnic mix, of people who have chosen to make Edinburgh their home. From the earliest immigrants including Jewish people, to the more recent influx from Eastern Europe, Edinburgh has provided a warm welcome to a wide variety of people and cultures. Indeed I have said on many occasions, that Edinburgh would not be the successful city that it is, were it not for those who have chosen to make our city their home.

That is not to say that there are not problems. Bigotry does cause problems for many of our people from time to time, but I have always been reassured that when I ask about the actual experience people have of Edinburgh, it is generally very good. At that same meeting with Rabbi David Rose, I was pleased to hear how few problems had been experienced by the Jewish community.

The meeting had been organised as one of a number to increase contact with the faith communities in the City. Too often we were going to meetings with representatives when there was a problem, or when there was a "crisis". In the aftermath of terrorist attacks we visited the Muslim community and met regularly with them to tackle any issues

of concern. Not to diminish the importance of such issues, we also felt that we should visit outwith a climate of crisis or controversy. The Chief Executive, Tom Aitchison, and I felt that we should make contact on a much more informal basis. The meetings have worked well, and we learned a great deal.

However, my most extensive involvement with the Jewish community was when Edinburgh was chosen to host the National Holocaust Memorial Service. I remember the earliest discussions, and was very proud of how supportive everyone was of making the event a success. Edinburgh has one of the best and most experienced events teams in any European City. Organising such a major event was a huge challenge, but I am delighted to say that Council staff handled it superbly. It was not an easy task; there were many groups who wished their particular issues to be addressed through the ceremony. It was vital that the central issues were respected as part of the overall event, and I think that, that was successfully achieved. The Holocaust was the darkest period of human history. I myself gained a huge amount of knowledge from being involved in overseeing this event.

On the night I met Ernest Levy, I had read "Just One More Dance", a harrowing, yet uplifting, account of his miraculous survival from a death camp. I thought I was prepared. I wasn't. Before the service a number of us chatted informally backstage at the Usher Hall. I was listening intently when Ernest Levy said "I can remember the Kapo guard. He was standing as close to me as you are now". His eyes fixed mine with a look that spoke volumes of the horrors he had witnessed. And yet when Ernest Levy spoke, he spoke of a German guard who rebelled against the horrors of the camp. Despite what he had been through he talked of the good in people, not the

bad. His speech, and the service were a humbling experience for all who witnessed it. The event and that brief discussion led me to read much more about the Holocaust including Martin Gilbert's harrowing history. Hearing Ernest Levy and reading Martin Gilbert's history highlighted for me the scale of the tragedy, including individual tragic experience.

It may seem to some that we have moved on. That the lessons from the Holocaust are cautionary, but not as relevant for the times in which we live. Nothing could be further from the truth. The ethnic upheaval of the 20th century, still echoes and reverberates in 21st century society. A lack of understanding and prejudice can still turn into bigotry and hatred. As we look in on the fractious situation in the Middle East, who can say that some of those opposed to the existence of an Israeli and Palestinian state side by side would not resort to extreme measures to support their view.

We must remember that the conditions that created fertile ground for extremism in Nazi Germany were mass unemployment and poverty. Electoral support for Hitler actually fell as economic conditions improved, but by then he was able to seize power. It may seem that we are far from such

circumstances, and indeed we are. However, one of the main things that keep the extremists at bay is being able to provide the quality of life that we do have in Edinburgh. For most of our people there has never been a period of time when there was greater access to work and wealth. We now have more millionaires than unemployed people living in Morningside, such is the progress made. Our aim must be to maintain the balance here achieved.

Edinburgh is a fantastic city. A city of great opportunity, and a city where everyone has a chance to share in the prosperity achieved. Sustaining our success will be a major challenge. We have to overcome our geographical remoteness from the heart of the European Community. Our financial services companies are world class, our tourism industry now supports 30,000 jobs all year round. Our universities and higher education facilities are world class as well with a reputation that attracts people from throughout the world to study and to live in Edinburgh, further fuelling our success.

Edinburgh is an extraordinary success. The strongest city economy in the UK outside London. A quality of life second to none. But, fundamentally it is successful because of its people. A unique mix of residents born and bred,

with those who have chosen Edinburgh as their home, is what has made Edinburgh great. Jewish people who have made Edinburgh their home, have contributed a huge amount to that success by being part of the mix that gives Edinburgh one of the most highly educated, and talented people of any city there is. Each community plays its part in joining in that success, but brings diversity as well by preserving and remembering their identity.

Looking to the future, we have to ensure that the same spirit of optimism and togetherness prevails. We must continue our focus on wealth creation, for if we do not move forward, we will certainly move back. We must ensure that extremism is challenged at every opportunity, just as enlightened tolerance is championed. We are lucky. Lucky to live in a wonderful city. Lucky to live in a tolerant and contented society. However, we need to remember that we have also made our own luck through our combined endeavours, and we should have the ambition to make Britain's best city even better through hard work and the determination to succeed at what we do. If we do that then our future can be even better for all or our people and our city.

Looking Back

The following items of interest and curiosity have been printed by kind permission of Harvey L Kaplan, director of the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre in Glasgow.

“Curious Complaint” [23 March 1825]

Account of a court case involving a complaint by Michael Jonas that “the majority of the Jews resident in this city had combined against him in consequence of his holding a Synagogue in his own house, consisting of nine individuals of his own family and a Polander.” The rest of the community had for the previous five weeks deprived Jonas and his family of access to kosher meat. They had a synagogue and a rabbi/shochet. The majority congregation agreed to let Jonas have meat if he paid his synagogue contribution, and the magistrate agreed that this was fair.

“The Late Lady Rosebery” [20 Nov 1890]

In 1890, the paper reported on the death of typhoid fever of Hannah, Lady Rosebery, only daughter and heiress of Baron Mayer Amschel de Rothschild.

“No better, truer woman, no sincerer friend...ever lived... Her name was a household word in many of the poorer districts, where she was helpful, directly or indirectly, in all wisely managed philanthropic efforts.”

The article goes on to describe how Reverend Furst was called upon to make funeral arrangements, and took with him four Jewish ladies to perform tahara.

Annabel Goldie

Conservative & Unionist MSP
for Edinburgh South (MEP)

It is a great honour for me to have been asked to write for The Edinburgh Star. The Jewish community in Edinburgh and the east of Scotland contribute a great deal to our nation's society, and they deserve recognition for it.



As an Elder in the Church of Scotland, I have always felt a common bond with the Jewish Community. That is hardly surprising, since there are such common bonds between Christianity and Judaism. The commonality between my Old Testament and your Tanakh is the most obvious example of this. The fact that I live my life by the teachings of the Bible, and you live yours according to the laws of the Torah, shows that what unites our two religions is far more significant than what divides them.

And so it should be. Indeed, the same logic applies to many other religions. Having religious belief – any religious belief – is a great healer. It provides solace in times of stress, hope in times of despair, guidance in times of doubt. Most importantly, religious observance teaches us right from wrong, and reminds us of the important things in life.

As I look at modern Scotland, I can't help but feel that the family unit has a more crucial role to play than ever. The family is the most important institution in Scotland. Generally speaking, children brought up in stable families under the guidance of married parents undoubtedly have the best chance of carving out a successful future for themselves. That's not merely my opinion – it's a fact. Of course, some children who come from broken families will succeed far beyond some children from united families. On average, though, the statistics speak for themselves. That's why it's so important that the trend of family breakdown in Scotland is reversed.

Politicians have a role to play in making this happen, but so does religion. The job of politicians is not to preach – rather it is to formulate an environment where marriage and togetherness is easier and more financially rewarding. The job of Ministers in my Church and Rabbis in your Synagogue, on the other hand, is to preach on these issues. Indeed, that is an approach which I would like to see more of. Too many politicians get involved in religious affairs, and too many religious figures get embroiled in politics. Politics should be left to politicians, and morality to the moralists.

I am acutely aware that too many people in Scotland think that the only thing minorities care about are minority issues. Catholics are only concerned about denominational schools; black people only want to talk about racism; Jews are only interested in Israel. Of course, that's utter nonsense. By and large, the issues which affect Catholics, 'Blacks' and Jews are exactly the same as those which affect Protestants, 'Whites' and Muslims. Everyone is concerned about the NHS, about the lack of affordable housing, and about rising crime and damaging drugs abuse. These are issues which politicians of all parties must tackle.

Scotland has always prided itself on being a meritocratic nation. Those who work hardest do best, no matter where they come from, and no matter what their beliefs. I want to make sure that this is always the case. The Torah and the Bible teach our great religions one common lesson – tolerance. We must be tolerant of people of all religious beliefs and of none.

However, we must also be measured in what we say – especially politicians. I think we Scots already are a pretty tolerant bunch, and I do sometimes cringe when I see people who are so desperate to believe the worst of their own countrymen. With the exception of a few unsavoury incidents from time to time, Scotland is not generally a sectarian country. We know that we stand united, as Scots. It's the job of Judaism, Christianity, and all other faiths to keep it that way.

“Conversion of a Jew” [27 March 1830]

“A few nights ago, a Jew named Jacob Samuel, was baptised by the Rev. Mr McFarlane, of Anderston, in his chapel in Clyde Street. The ceremony was performed in presence of several gentlemen belonging to the committee of the Society for promoting Christianity among the Jews, and a very large and respectable audience.” Jacob Samuel was then going to be a missionary in his own right, attempting to convert Jews.

Marriages [21 Dec 1900]

In 1900, there was a report of the marriage, in Graham Street Synagogue, of Harry Glasstone to Annie Camberg, when the bride was attended by two pages and a number of little girls dressed in white and carrying flowers.

Jewish businessmen appear in the classified announcements:

“P.Levy & Co., 63 New Building”

[6 Oct 1827]

“Beg leave to inform their numerous Friends in Edinburgh and its Vicinity, that Mr Philip Levy has just returned from London, where he has been attending all the Fur Sales for the last six weeks, and made very considerable purchases in Skins of every description...

“P.L. & Co. beg to remind the Nobility and Gentry of this city and its neighbourhood, that they were the Original Fur Manufacturers in Scotland...”

An Alternative Perspective on the Situation in Israel

Maurice Naftalin

The following thoughts have been expressed in response to the article, 'The war of the innocent' by Tal Gilad seen in the last edition of the Star.

"At least [our great-grandchildren] will be in a more peaceful, safer world". That tempting prospect is the closing argument for Tal Gilad's piece in the last issue of the Star. Yet currently, the world—and Israel in particular—seems to be moving rapidly in the opposite direction, becoming daily much less peaceful and safe; indeed, the way that things are going it's hard to be confident that our great-grandchildren will be around to see it at all, so the promise of peace and safety isn't to be lightly refused. In this piece I'm going to take a look at the conditions of Tal's offer, and see how wise—or unwise—it would be to take him up on it. I'll also explain what I think is the effect of publishing such a piece in a Jewish magazine.

First, let's recall his proposal. His central argument is that Israel is prevented by "sensitivity and sportsman-like righteousness" and by "humanitarian narcissism", from fighting effectively. Israel should "get over" these feelings and state openly "we are a legitimate target; and so are you, to your very last one". This was written in the context of the summer war, when Israel's offensive was widely criticised for the human and material cost inflicted on Lebanon. Tal doesn't take refuge in arguments about regrettable collateral damage or reproaches towards Hizbollah for siting their weapons amongst innocent civilians: instead, he questions whether the citizens of Lebanon should be considered innocent at all. His answer is that since they accepted Hizbollah as a legitimate political party, and voted for it to participate in their government, they are not innocent but a legitimate target.

"it would be obviously absurd to suggest that Israeli bombs pick out Hizbollah voters;"

Tal makes no mention of Jewish ethics, unless we include his scathing dismissal of righteousness and humanitarian feelings. Although Jewish ethics would seem suitable material for a discussion in a Jewish magazine, I'm going to set that discussion aside in order to try to take his argument on its own terms and see where it leads. Hizbollah gained 14 seats out of 128 in Lebanon's 2005 election, although the turnout was only around 50%. That means that, by a very rough calculation, around 200,000 Lebanese voted for Hizbollah. If voting for a "militant, armed organisation" makes someone a legitimate target, it is easy to understand Tal's frustration: around 1,000 Lebanese died in the summer war, a hit rate of only 1 in 200. And many of the thousand dead Lebanese may have voted for other parties, or have been too young to vote, which would make the IDF even more ineffective by his criteria. I imagine he would reply to this last point that most deaths were in the south of the country and in South Beirut, which are concentrations of Hizbollah strength, so increasing the likelihood of successful targeting by voting record. But in

fact he doesn't take his own argument as seriously as I have tried to, since it would be obviously absurd to suggest that Israeli bombs pick out Hizbollah voters; his argument is that none of the citizens of Lebanon are innocent. Indeed to him they are all—young and old; Muslim, Christian and Druze; followers of Hizbollah, of the Phalange, or of no party at all—"legitimate targets".

A war which makes legitimate targets of every citizen of the opposing state is total war. Indeed, Tal's only historical parallel is with the destruction of Dresden; he can't use any later example, as no belligerent state has admitted to practising total war since 1945. He argues that since Hamas and Hizbollah target civilians, Israel should wage—and admit to waging—total war against the states from which they "stem", amongst which he names Syria and Iran, as well as Lebanon. He can't bring himself to say what exactly he means by this, though he mentions pictures that "we may not like" on CNN. It's not surprising he doesn't want to be explicit, since the only conclusion to be drawn from his argument about legitimate targets is that Israel should be planning saturation bombing of Damascus and Teheran.

I don't suppose that many readers of the Star would want to follow Tal all the way there. Perhaps not many will agree that that's where he is going, though a careful reading of his piece leaves no doubt about it. If anyone still does suppose that Israel's path to peace and security lies through total war against Syria and Iran, they haven't been paying much attention to the news from Iraq or Lebanon during the last year. But perhaps he only really means us to go this far: during the summer war, the IDF observed restraints, and were, at best, indifferently successful. So, he is saying, if they had observed fewer restraints, they would have been more successful. But even in this diluted form, the argument clearly doesn't work: in the Lebanon, the IAF targeted everything that moved south of the Litani river for an entire month, and yet the final ground attack of 30,000 infantry was still halted by a Hizbollah force of less than half that size, despite overwhelming conventional superiority. What exactly were the restraints that hindered the IDF here?

So his argument doesn't stand up, and is also highly unlikely to be officially adopted—so what? After all, since Israeli policy isn't decided by the readers of the Edinburgh Star, does it matter what we read in its pages? Actually, I think it matters a great deal, and that we do a great deal of harm by giving credibility to such views. You won't agree with me if you think, with Tal, that "the Arabs" are all of one uniform murderous anti-Jewish intent, that Islam is a culture of death, and that peace initiatives are invariably a cover to persuade Israel to drop its guard. And indeed you will think that, if you choose to ignore the evidence of all the diversity and conflict within the different societies of the Middle East and to focus only on the most extreme elements. There's no difficulty in finding such elements—indeed, they are powerful influences within the governments of some countries—and if you choose to regard

Around and About The Shein Scene

Coffee Morning

A pre-Yomtov coffee morning took place in the Community Centre on 10 September when 40 people were encouraged to sample the delights of an exotic range of teas organised by Lynn Cooper from the Chai Tea House. For the less adventurous, "normal" tea and coffee were served aided and abetted by the usual popular cake stall. Over £200 was raised. The date of the next coffee morning with its ever attractive cake selling stall has yet to be announced..



WIZO held a social evening on 4th November when 60 sat down to an appetising meal followed by entertainment provided by a four-piece band organised by our very own talented musician-cum-Junior Warden Bill Simpson. The quartet's wide range of music and superb harmonising were enhanced by Liz MacEwan with her rendering of old favourites sung with sheer professionalism and feeling. WIZO co-chair Katie Goodwin welcomed the enthusiastic audience and later extended thanks to all who had helped on the stage and behind the scenes. Over £700 was raised for funds.

Luncheon Club

On 9 November members of the Luncheon Club were in no rush to return home. After their usual first class meal in the Community Centre they headed for the Festival Theatre to see a matinee performance of the West End musical "Me and My Girl". Tuneful hits such as "Leaning on a Lamppost" and "The Lambeth Walk" evoked many memories and the 30-strong group left the theatre with a smile on their faces and a spring in their step, even if it was a necessarily modified version of the "Walk".



Remembrance Service

The annual Remembrance Service took place in the Synagogue on 12 November.

Rabbi David Rose conducted the service to commemorate the members of the Congregation who gave their lives in the two World Wars and the Sinai campaign. The choir, under choir master David Mendelsohn, and a bugler playing the Last Post added poignancy to the occasion. Alec Kleinberg and Lenny Berger carried the banners of the Edinburgh Jewish Branch of the British Legion and AJEX. After the service, tea was served in the Community Centre where Vice-Chairman of the Congregation Raymond Taylor welcomed everyone and thanked all who had helped with the organisation of the event. In the morning Lenny attended the City Chambers where, at the Cenotaph, he laid a wreath in the shape of a Magen David.

Folk Dancing

Israeli Folk Dancing took to the floor in the community centre on 18 November. Dance instructress Jane Mackenzie, no stranger to this art, and her partner Graham rose to the challenge of aiding and abetting an enthusiastic crowd of 40, from the teens to the eighties, to participate in Israeli, Turkish and Balkan Folk Dances. Taped music and demonstrations from the couple encouraged a goodly portion of the group to converge on the dance floor, to the envy and on occasion amusement of the less adventurous. Sadly there was no sight of belly dancing. Jane has attended the Machol Folk Dance courses run by Maurice Stone in London and was obviously well qualified to revise well-known dances and introduce new ones to the delight of the company even if left feet became somehow confused with their partners. Refreshments were served and a commendable £220 was raised for communal funds.

Chanukah

Havdalah conducted by Rabbi David Rose the lighting of two candles by



David Goldberg and the singing of Mazot Tzur heralded the beginning of the Chanukah dinner on 16 December. The welcome by Lesley Danzig to the 100 in the audience was followed by an excellent meal prepared by ladies of the community centre.



There then followed entertainment provided by Stephanie Brickman and her excellent duo, Jo Nicolson on the clarinet and Phil Alexander, of Moishes Bagel, at piano and accordion. Stephanie's programme of Yiddish songs, beautifully sung in a highly professional manner, won enthusiastic acclaim from the gathering. Communal singing of "I have a little dreydel", thankfully in English and rendered in a variety of keys, added to the enjoyment. Stephanie's "special guest" joined her in a harmonious Yiddish number, David Goldberg's rich voice doing credit to his second Barmitzvah, celebrated in the Synagogue that morning. Stephanie had a special message for David and very good friend Rose, wishing them many years of good health with the words "if you are healthy you are happy and equally if you are happy you are healthy". The evening rounded off with the draw for the 100 club. Joyce Sperber thanked the artistes and all who had contributed to the most successful evening, mentioning in particular Irene Mason and her merry band of helpers behind the scenes.

The Cheder children did a good imitation of what might be described as the Jewish version of a Gospel Choir at the Chanukah Service, which took place on the third day of this happy festival. Hannah Cohn-Simmen, of 'ceetah' one and Clare Levy, in 'ceetah' two, lit the candles. This production was followed by all the children performing Chanukah songs with a difference.

It was altogether a Chanukah celebration which moved away from the usual format, and 'big kids' as well as little kids thrilled to the antics and inexplicable magic performed by 'Alexander the Great'. A tea comprising potato latkes and doughnuts among other delights, was organised by June Budd and her army of helpers, and consumed with great relish.



It was hard work getting up the hill in front of me even with all my new friends surrounding me with high spirits of about what was to come. The zigzagging path grew ever steeper with the odd shortcut, which the group took with pleasure. I was trying hard to not to work too hard also, as the last thing I wanted to do was get all sweaty in my smart clothes, especially as the temperature had been above 35 degrees all day. I was one of

“the Old City seemed to have something different about it ”

the first to reach the end of the path and after a minute or so the whole 32 of us in the group had regrouped. We then all headed together through the Old City, and travelled along the front of the now almost familiar Zion Gate tourist shops with their novelty t-shirts sporting a range of graphics from Coca Cola written in Hebrew to a word play on the popular Bobby McFerrin song, “Don’t worry, be Jewish!” However these familiarities were not all that there was this time, as the Old City seemed to have something different about it, the reason being that it was Friday night and Shabbat was coming in. The group travelled past the old Roman ruins, and through all of the other tourist and falafel shop-lined streets and even at one point through the bakery district which was always a wonderful experience as it brought with it the enjoyable smells of a day’s sweet pastries baking. At one point it seemed that

this constant twisting and turning through alleyways would never end, with every building looking almost identical to the last with their gold and red tinted limestone walls of Jerusalem stone, but then we came to a large courtyard at the top of a large set of stairs and were told to wait by our leaders. This we were told, was where the Inauguration of the Shabbat ceremony would be held for the group; it involved the lighting of two candles in order to bring in Shabbat. Once this had been completed with the right complementary blessings, we all descended down the long flight of stairs which seemed to have been weathered and worn to an extreme extent by the sheer number of people who had passed by them every day ever since they had been built, and passed the old men selling kabalistic red string, finally stopping in a queue outside a large grey gateway which was the security gate to the Western Wall courtyard or Kotel as it is known in Hebrew.

That morning had been a slow one as we had spent a late night having a tour of the city of modern Jerusalem by night until the early hours. After a filling breakfast, we set out on another tour, this time of the local area around the hotel. The tour consisted of being shown where the 1967 Jerusalem Municipal line was and how much borders have changed since then, and also the house of a local politician across the road from our hotel, in fact his huge mansion. This tour was cut rather short though because of the seeming lack of interest about bureaucratic residences by a bunch of exhausted 16 year olds; we instead walked back to the hotel for a large buffet lunch and a short briefing of what was to come that night – a visit to the Kotel for Friday night service. We were all very excited to hear of this venue as it would be considerably different from our British experiences of only ever having had services in local synagogues compared with an outdoor holy

“There looked to be over a hundred different Friday Night services being conducted simultaneously in front of The Wall”

experience. The group was then given 3 hour’s preparation time to wash and relax before our walk later to the Old City. The preparation time was spent washing clothes with travel wash in the hotel sink, waiting for my three roommates to finish using the shower as it was my turn to be last, and playing football in the five-a-side court behind the hotel. Once showered, we all put on the smartest set of clothes that we had brought with us as it is customary to be well-dressed when attending religious services. The three hours seemed to

pass very quickly as with all recreation time that we received because it was always so enjoyable. Soon enough we were all gathered together again in the hotel lobby each of us brandishing our compulsory blue insulated water carrier. Everyone was looking brilliant together, each in their smartest clothes and, as soon as it had been checked that everyone had their water bottle full to the lid, we all headed off from the hotel downwards towards the "Old City Mount" just as the sun was beginning to set, each of us feeling wonderful with the weather being so perfect and everyone looking great also.

The wait to get through security was not long as our Israeli leader had a special security pass which she flashed at the officers on duty, who let the group through as one, even though almost all of us set off the metal detector archway. The sight we saw as soon as we emerged out the far side of the security building was truly breathtaking; a sea of thousands of people all facing towards The Wall; some singing, some dancing in circles, with some just with heads bowed in prayer rocking slowly backwards and forwards. All together this made for a sight that I found to be one of the greatest I have ever seen. There looked to be over a hundred different Friday Night services being conducted simultaneously in front of The Wall; orthodox, reform, Chassidic. The Chassidim with their black attire and wide hats seemed to occupy most of the scene. Other tour groups of teenagers from around the world were

doing what my group and I were just about to do. Our leaders gathered us together in a circle and briefly told us about emergency meeting points and boundaries for the area. Around us there seemed to be other tour groups each having their own same briefing, I recognised one of these as being that of my cousin. Others in my group recognised people in the other group as well. After a short time spent catching up on all of the great and numerous activities we had been participating in so far in our tours, the leaders separated boys and girls as the services were segregated, and we all headed down to pray together at The Wall. As we came closer to the wall, the sea of Chassidim became more and more dense, and we ended up squeezing our way through the throngs of people to find a free area of prayer at which to stand to hold our service. We soon found one and we began the service which made me feel part of the immense crowd surrounding me almost of if it were one body with spiritualness pumping through our veins. Once we had each finished our prayers we each moved back towards our meeting point where the rest of the group was waiting for us. We then began to retrace our path back to our hotel, singing Shabbat songs loudly into the warm night air, and back towards the large, delicious Friday night meal that awaited us.

I am most grateful to the EHC Cheder's AJE Examination Prize trust fund for supporting my Israel Tour.

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The Keshnet Eilon Music Center

Eric Milligan

Since the publication of the piece I penned for the last edition of *Edinburgh Star* recollecting the highlights of my visit to Israel, I have received a number of queries from readers wanting more information about the Keshnet Eilon Music Center and Violin Mastercourse.

Interest in it has been intense because it is well known that the Centre's location on the north of Israel is where the Hezbollah bombs rained down. Thankfully, the bombs that fell in the area did not fall on the Centre. Miraculously, it escaped any physical damage but during the outrages, their work was disrupted and required temporary relocation to Tel Aviv. I am happy to inform you that following the ceasefire, they returned home more determined than ever to continue their work; also my close American friend, Angelica Berrie, of whom I wrote so much about in the last *Edinburgh Star*, organised a special benefit concert for them in Englewood, New Jersey, USA last September in order to raise funds to help finance the extra costs involved in the disruption of their programme.

Keshnet Eilon is a non-profit organisation registered in Israel in 1991. It relies on its funding from foundations, businesses and individuals. It exists to nurture the next generation of young Israeli violinists and to assist them achieve the highest international standards of artistic attainment.

A typical summer mastercourse would be attended by approximately 50 young violinists from around 20 different countries selected by audition of whom perhaps 15 would be Israelis.

They organise a varied programme of concerts, which feature classical, ethnic, vocal and other music in their own concert hall to be enjoyed by music loving audiences from the Galilee who reside some distance from the main centres of population.

In addition, they have performed benefit concerts in Israel and elsewhere to promote what they do and to show how well they can do it. Benefit concerts have been organised in London, Geneva, New York, Washington DC, San Francisco and Houston. As yet, not Edinburgh – something worth thinking about?

I trust this gives the additional information many readers sought. Those who want to know more can contact the Keshnet Eilon Music Centre and Violin Mastercourse direct at Kibbutz Eilon, Western Galilee 22845, Israel.

I salute the determination of those involved in the Centre for refusing to give up in adversity. We, who believe in a civilised world, must never surrender our cultural aspirations to those who by way of waging acts of terrorist bombing, show themselves to be boneheaded barbarians.

I am reminded that throughout the ages artistic and cultural expression is often like a shaft of light that beams through the darkness of war.

I am reminded too that our Arts Council here received its Royal Charter in the immediate aftermath of the horrors of the Second World War. In 1946 Maynard Keynes went on the air to broadcast the aims and purpose behind its launch. He did so in these terms:

“ The artist walks where the breath of the spirit blows him. He cannot be told his direction; he does not know it himself. But he leads the rest of us into fresh pastures and teaches us to love and to enjoy what we often begin by rejecting, enlarging our sensibility and purifying our instincts.

The purpose of the Arts Council of Great Britain is to create an environment, to breathe a spirit, to cultivate an opinion, to offer a stimulus to such purpose that the artist and the public can each sustain and live on the other in that union which has occasionally existed in the past at the great ages of a communal civilised life.”

I am also reminded that our own Edinburgh Festival came into existence during the same aftermath and is entirely consistent with those ideals so wonderfully expressed by Maynard Keynes all those years ago.

I am also reminded that some years ago during the siege of Sarajevo, when the bombs were raining down, when emergency services were suspended, when people were cowering in hovels and contact with the outside world was rendered almost impossible. I, along with the irrepressible Ricky Demarco, aided by broadcaster, Sheena Macdonald, managed to make direct telephone contact with a group of artists, who were themselves sheltering together with only candlelight to lift the gloom of darkness. We were able to extend to them the hope and the invitation to come to our most cultured city during our next Festival once a ceasefire had been realised. They found the contact with us here in Edinburgh to be like a shaft of light that reached them, lifted their spirits and gave them a meaningful goal to aim for which they achieved in an emotional reunion with our good selves at the subsequent Edinburgh Festival.

All of these thoughts have come to me as a consequence of my visit to the Keshet Eilon Music Center which is dedicated to the conviction that music, one of the eternal symbols of humanity going back to King David's lyre in biblical times, can serve as a bridge between religions, peoples and nations and reflecting on the challenges that they have had to face recently.

With Compliments
from
Jessie Franklin

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The Edinburgh Star



Dear Reader

For many years, the Star has supported its three excellent annual editions through advertising, shared revenue of the Yom Teruah, greetings and of course your donations.

Regrettably, the level of donations has fallen, whilst printing and distribution costs have risen. We now face a financial crisis, which, if not resolved, would make it impossible for us to continue mailing the Edinburgh Star without compromising the quality of the magazine. We are therefore obliged to begin requesting a donation of between £15 and £20 per annum to ensure you continue to receive the publication in its present form.

We regret the need to repeatedly call on you, but it takes between £15 and £20 to produce three editions per year and that need repeats itself every year. That sum assumes, also, that every subscriber donates, but unfortunately not everyone does. You should also be aware that we are constantly examining ways of reducing costs.

We would like to thank you in anticipation of your continuing support of the Edinburgh Star.

Yours sincerely

The Editorial Board

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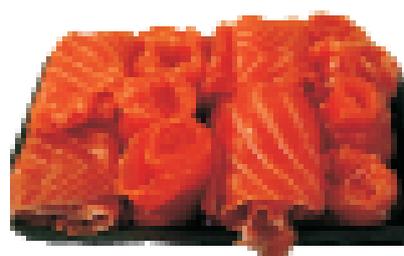
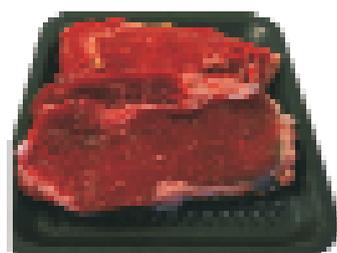
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Support for Russian Jews

Nigel Griffiths

As a young MP and a longstanding member of Amnesty International, I undertook several visits behind the Iron Curtain to meet Jewish dissidents, desperate to emigrate to Israel. Sally and I travelled with Greville Janner and his wife Myra, usually undercover using normal tourist agencies like Intourist in the Soviet Union, as well as to Bulgaria and Romania which before 1945 had substantial Jewish populations.

The Soviet Union was home to a million and a half Jews in the 1980s and 90s, but as soon as anyone applied to leave Russia for Israel, they were fired from their jobs and it was impossible for them to gain other work. They then opened themselves to charges of being unemployed and a “parasite on the State” which was a criminal offence, punishable by exile to the wastes of Siberia or Mongolia. For many dissidents, their only income came from generous Jewish organisations in the UK and around the world. We met teachers, doctors and engineers who had all been dismissed from their jobs simply for wanting to emigrate.

Our group visited Nobel Prizewinner Andrei Sakharov and Elena Bonner in their bleak Moscow apartment – so small that the kitchenette barely contained the old cooker and a sink, and the 12-foot square living room doubled up as the bed room.

Sadly Andrei died shortly afterwards, his health broken by his earlier hunger strike and years of neglect. We visited the only working synagogue and the Yeshiva, which was the only Jewish learning centre in a city of an estimated million Jews. These visits had their lighter moments. The universal currency in Moscow in the 1980s was Marlborough cigarettes. At the kerb-side, one packet waved in the air got you a taxi where a hundred roubles got nothing, in spite of being worth a notional £100! So my life-long non-smoking wife took a case-full of cigarettes through Soviet customs. All the biographies and rendezvous details of each dissident we were to meet were carried by me taped across my stomach in case I was searched. Greville carried other incriminating documents. Yet we waltzed through Moscow customs: but not Sally, who was asked if the cigarettes were for gifts or for her own consumption. “Never tell them you have gifts for anybody,” Greville had briefed us, so Sally, the picture of peach-cheek health, said “They are for me.” The customs officer looked her straight in the eye and said slowly: “Madam, do you not know . . . smoking is very detrimental to your health?” I nearly had to restrain my wife!

But the cigarettes allowed us to criss-cross Moscow and Leningrad – now St Petersburg, though we found the metro system was best for losing our KGB tails, since their cars were so much better than the Lada taxis we used. In fact using the roads posed even more risks to us than visiting dissidents, since the massive potholes in Moscow streets meant cars regularly swerved into each other and into pedestrians.

Nearly two decades later, things are very different. Although there are alarming anti-Semitic rightwing patriots, President Putin has clamped down on them, and people can freely emigrate.

In 2003 I visited the main Moscow synagogue with its wonderfully refurbished dome and outdoor stage where the

Jewish choir sings Hebrew songs – a far cry from the harassment we suffered in my previous visits.

Now there are 15 synagogues operating in Moscow and seven Jewish day schools. In addition, there is also a Jewish university in the capital city.

The people of Britain can be proud of the small part they played in giving so much hope to those persecuted in the Soviet Union.

Nigel Griffiths
Labour MP for South Edinburgh
Deputy Leader of the House of Commons

WHO ARE THEY?



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Answers on page 27.



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Divrei Torah

Second Bar Mitzvah

Berl Osborne

My Bar Mitzvah took place 70 years ago. On that occasion I did not give a dissertation. It was not the custom in the Community at that time, and so I thought I would make amends today on my second barmitzvah.

There is Mishnaic authority for a Bar Mitzvah aged thirteen. It is found in the Pirke Avot. There is no such authority for a second Bar Mitzvah so a cynic might say it is a self-inflicted wound.

However, it makes a good excuse for a Kiddush and to have a 'l'chaim' with one's friends; so why not! I was particularly drawn to the special Haftorah for today – Machar Chodesh – the eve of the New Moon, because it deals with the very special friendship, that between David and Jonathan, which remained for many years despite the ever-present suspicion of King Saul, Jonathan's father, who was convinced that David was conspiring to usurp the throne.

To put the story into historical context, David was born some time in the 11th Century BCE, about three thousand years ago. He was born in Bethlehem, the son of Jesse of the tribe of Judah. At that time the Children of Israel were bent on taking possession of Canaan, the land flowing with milk and honey that had been promised to them. Having captured Jericho, they were making their way westwards towards the coast and they were facing great opposition from the peoples already settled there. It took centuries for the conquest of Canaan to be completed.

“Saul was, and had for some time been, mentally disturbed, and subject to violent mood swings.”

Prominent among those who opposed them were the Philistines, who peopled the western coast. The Philistines

challenged the Israelites and their King Saul to provide a warrior who would match the Philistine giant Goliath in single combat. It was left to the prophet Samuel who was the de facto leader of the Israelites to seek out from Jesse his youngest son David who was a shepherd boy. He was a skilled musician, reputed to be a brave warrior, a good speaker and handsome in appearance. Also he gained the admiration of the prophet Samuel who thought that the spirit of the Lord was in him. There followed the famous encounter with Goliath whom the young shepherd boy defeated with a slingshot. He was acclaimed as a national hero. He became the King's armourer and one of his commanders. He married the King's daughter Michal, who was in love with him along with half of the other girls in Israel. He was, as they say, quite a 'nosh'. His friendship with Saul's son, Jonathan, became an archetypal example of male friendship. Saul was, and had for some time been, mentally disturbed, and subject to violent mood swings. He was probably suffering from what we now call manic depression. Indeed, one of the reasons for David's preferment was that it was thought that David's sweet singing would help dispel his violent mood swings. However David's growing popularity made Saul increasingly jealous and he made several attempts at David's life. David, therefore, kept out of his way as far as possible – and this brings us to Machor Chodesh.

In those days Rosh Chodesh was celebrated as a minor festival and the meal on its eve was a festive one – a seuda which David, Saul's son-in-law would have been expected to attend. But the shadow of Saul's jealousy hung over the house and David was afraid to show his face, and so he absented himself from his father-in-law's table on two occasions. Saul took this as an affront, and so he challenged Jonathan, “Why did not the son of Jesse come to the meal either yesterday or today?” Jonathan tried to cover up for David and said that his family had its own celebration in

Bethlehem and so he, Jonathan, had given him permission to go there. But Saul was neither taken in nor pacified, and so he let fly at Jonathan. “Ben na'avav hamardoos – you son of rebellion and treachery – do you think that I don't know that you have preferred the son of Jesse – and that as long as he lives upon the Earth you will not be established – neither you nor your Kingdom, and so Jonathan, send him to me because he deserves to die”. But Jonathan conspired to allow David to escape the clutches of his courtiers. That conspiracy, involving his messenger, a little boy, and the shooting of arrows, enabled David to flee and he took refuge among the Philistines and he was about to join them in their planned attack on Saul. But the Philistines did not really trust him and ordered him to leave the battlefield. In the ensuing battle on Mount Gilboa both Saul and Jonathan were killed, and David mourned both his King and his friend.

*“Your glory has been slain in the high places,
How have the mighty fallen.
Tell it not in Gath,
Do not proclaim it in the streets of Ashkalon,
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice.
Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives,
And in their deaths they were not divided.
They were swifter than eagles,
They were stronger than lions.”*

David settled in Hebron, where he was anointed King by Samuel and the men of Judah, and eventually by all the tribes of Israel. The Israelites had been unable to capture Jerusalem even though it was centrally located and the most important city in the region. However David captured it and made it his capital, both religious and political. He sent for the Ark of the Covenant and had it installed in Jerusalem amidst scenes of great rejoicing. He opened a critical corridor that connected the Northern and the Southern tribes and thus establishing the nation Israel. David ruled Israel for forty years during which time he defeated the Philistines, the Moabites and the Edomites; he captured

Damascus thus extending his territory from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates.

“He was no Tzadik, and not even in Tony Blair’s immortal words ‘a straight kinda guy’”

But for all his fine qualities, David was no Tzadik – no paragon of virtue. He committed adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah – one of his warriors. She had a son by him called Absalom. Then he, in an early manifestation of ‘protectia’, had Uriah sent into fierce battle correctly anticipating that he would be killed, leaving the way open to him to marry Bathsheba. He was no Tzadik, and not even in Tony Blair’s immortal words ‘a straight kinda guy’. This was a dreadful sin for which David had to be punished – he knew and

accepted this because he was a committed upholder of the rule of law believing that without its firm application, Israel would descend into a rabble. If you do wrong you have to be punished – the Halachah has no soft touch and is no respecter of royalty. David’s punishment was the death of his precious son Absalom. David mourned him in the famous words

*‘Oh Absalom, my son, my son,
If only I had died instead of you,
Oh Absalom my son.’*

Not very fair to Absalom you may think; but friendship and/or kinship with King David was never a smooth ride. If you think of those who were close to him: his friend Jonathan and his father-in-law Saul were killed in battle; his general and cuckolded friend was killed in battle; his son Absalom was killed in battle.

David himself died peacefully in bed in the comforting arms of Abishag, of whom more presently. As he grew old, David suffered from hypothermia – he could not get warm. And so his courtiers searched throughout the coasts of Israel to find a young girl who would cherish the King and lie on his bosom so that he could get warm. And so they found Abishag, the Shunamite, a damsel who was very fair and cherished the King. But on this occasion David behaved like a gentleman, because it says specifically in the book of Samuel ‘Ha Melech lo yodo’u’, the King knew her not. She was in fact the first physiotherapist in history. Before his death, he and the prophet Nathan decreed that he was to be succeeded by his son Solomon. He is said to have been buried on Mount Zion, but his living matzevah is the city of Jerusalem itself, and as we walk its streets, we walk in the footsteps of David ha Melech.

Collective responsibility

Sarah Levy

The Parsha of Noah begins with these words,

“These are the offspring of Noah; Noah was a righteous man, perfect in his generations.” So I have looked into just how perfect Noah was.



When G-d said he was going to destroy the world, Noah did not plead with G-d to give them a chance or to save them. He simply did exactly what G-d said. Abraham, on the other hand, pleaded with G-d to save the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. He honestly wanted to save the good people. Noah could have pleaded with G-d like Abraham did, possibly saving thousands of good people but he didn’t.

After the children of Israel built the Golden Calf G-d was so angry he wanted to kill them. Moses pleaded to G-d to reconsider his threat and asked G-d to remember the promise he made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to increase their offspring like the stars in heaven. And G-d did. Noah does not appear to have tried to save anyone, so was Noah truly a righteous person?

Jonathan Sacks tells how Jewish folklore says that Noah could be described as a wise man in a fur coat. Imagine an entire village is freezing cold, while people like Noah would put on a fur coat to keep themselves warm; people like Abraham or Moses would light a fire, keeping the entire village warm. Moses Alsech describes Noah as a “tsaddick in fur”. He said

that Noah had a special relationship with G-d but kept his special gift to himself and did not use it to help others.

“We must not judge Noah too badly as we do not know what he was thinking as he built the ark.”

We must not judge Noah too badly as we do not know what he was thinking as he built the ark. He could have thought that asking G-d to save the people would be pointless. He may have been too frightened. We don’t know, but Noah did not appear to have shown collective responsibility; thinking of others and not just yourself.

Last year in the Cheder Prize Giving, my sister Clare was given a book called Clara’s Story, which is one girl’s tale of being a Jew during the Second World War. At the start of the book, Clara Isaacman personally thanks all the people who helped her to stay alive. This is part of what she said:

“Many people have risked their lives to save mine. They were not all Jews, but they understood and practised the ideals that are common to all faiths. They valued human life, regardless of religion or nationality. Some of these brave, selfless people perished in the attempt to save their country and to keep people like me and my family alive.”

I think that this really sums up the idea of collective responsibility. Helping people no matter what race they are.

In my own family, for instance, there are examples of collective responsibility. One of my great-grandfathers was too young to be called up to the army in World War 1 but he wanted to do his bit so he left his family in Manchester and joined the 32nd Glasgow Highland Light Infantry (even though he wasn't Scottish) voluntarily and spent 4 years fighting for his country. When The Second World War started he was in South Africa and he joined the Cape Defence Corps Volunteer Reserves and spent all his free time training others.

“every six months, they would get a new nanny and another young lady would be saved”

My other two great-grandparents were living in South Africa at the time of the Second World War. They managed to help young women to get out of Germany and into safety. They employed them as nannies for my Grandma and her sister so that every six months, they would get a new nanny and another young lady would be saved.

Everyone can show collective responsibility by giving what they can to charity or by taking more direct action like volunteering to help in homeless shelters. Actions count just as much as money. For example, my family and I recycle our rubbish to help the environment. If everyone recycled, it would make a big difference to our planet.

Our family also buys some fair trade items. But we probably wouldn't buy them if it wasn't for Rabbi Rose telling us all about it. This goes to show that doing something very small like telling somebody about fair trade, recycling, donating money to charities could make a big difference.

Different relationship's with G-d

Jessica Spencer

Vayeira, my parsha, contains some of the most important stories in the entire Torah, illustrating strikingly different relationships with G-d.



When G-d decides to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham bargains with him and persuades G-d not to if there are even 50 innocent people, then 40 innocent people, and gradually works his way down to ten. In this tale, Abraham and G-d's relationship is an almost human one; one of a devoted servant and his master. Abraham considered himself as low as dust and ashes, even though he had attained the level of talking to G-d. G-d listens to Abraham and pays attention to him, and this reminded me of a teacher considering changing the rules because of a pupil saying they are unfair.

When Lot, his wife, and their two daughters flee Sodom, they are instructed not to look back. However Lot's wife, who isn't even given a name, does look back and, as a result, gets

All this brought me to the question “What can I do?” I have decided to show some collective responsibility myself by donating some of my Bat Mitzvah money to WIZO Bar/Bat Mitzvah Campaign. The money allows WIZO to provide Bar or Bat Mitzvah celebrations for children in Israel who otherwise wouldn't be able to have any celebrations at all. I am also going to give some money to a non-Jewish charity called Water Aid which provides clean, healthy water for people in third-world countries.

Every time we come to Shul, we see Hillel's quote outside the doors and I think that this sums up everything I have said to you today.

“If I am not for myself who will be for me?”

In, my opinion this sums up what Noah was thinking while he was building the Ark. He was thinking about himself, about how he should put himself first.

“If I am only for myself, what am I?”

By acting like Noah, are you truly a whole person? It's better to be like Abraham and Moses. I might not be a world leader, but I would like to think that in my own, very small way, I can make a difference and help others.

“If not now, when?”

Today is my Bat Mitzvah, I am going from being a child to being an adult. When a child becomes bar or bat mitzvah, they are expected to carry out the mitzvot that Jewish adults are expected to do. But I think that after becoming Bat Mitzvah it is time to start showing more collective responsibility and to start helping others and to play a more active role in the Jewish community.

turned into a pillar of salt. The relationship between Lot's wife and G-d is one where G-d is an all-powerful being, but one whom she does not respect or obey. Because of this, she gets punished. This relationship made me think of a scenario of a school when the fire alarm goes. The teacher tells everyone to follow, and they do, but one of the pupils sneaks back to get her mobile phone, and gets burned to a crisp as a result.

At the end of the Parsha, G-d puts Abraham to the test by asking him to sacrifice his favourite son. Abraham decides to do this, and because he puts all his trust and faith in G-d, G-d blesses him and all his descendants. This relationship is one where G-d is a supernatural being, but one whom if you obey, believe in, and follow, all will turn out fine in the end. This doesn't have a clear parallel in a school, because teachers don't know everything, and if a teacher told you to kill your

“Abraham has two versions of faith and religion, a questioning one and a totally trusting one.”

Dad, you would probably phone the police. This is a unique situation because normally, if there is someone whom you trust utterly, they will not ask you to kill your child for them.

The most interesting thing about these three different relationships with G-d is that two of them involve the same person. Abraham has two versions of faith and religion, a questioning one and a totally trusting one.

It is not just Abraham who has two versions of faith. Both of these ideas of faith are an integral part of Judaism. We all question, yet we all, occasionally, obey. Which of these two aspects of Judaism is more important? Both are appropriate to different times and situations. If Abraham had not questioned G-d's decisions about Sodom and Gomorrah, three innocent people would have been killed, and there would not be Moabites or Ammonites. Yet, if Abraham had questioned the intentions of G-d when he was instructed to sacrifice Isaac, there would not be a sacred covenant between G-d and the Jews.

But what about Lot's wife? She was not obedient, or even questioning. By turning round, she was disobedient and look what happened to her. She didn't have a good relationship with G-d and finally she does not even have a soul. A pillar of salt is a thing without humanity, with not even a wisp of life.

Should Lot's wife have been obedient or questioning? I think that when you are about to die, and someone tells you how you can survive, it's better to be obedient.

So which should I be, obedient or questioning? Personally, I think I am more questioning, but would this be right? In her diary, my role model Anne Frank appears as a very lively, inquisitive sort of girl, who appears to question everything. However, she was in a predicament where her very survival depended on being obedient.

One of the passages that show her questioning nature was in the entry for the 6th July 1944 where she writes:

"I wonder if it's really a good quality not to let myself be influenced. Is it really good to follow almost entirely my own conscience?"

"I can't imagine how anyone can say, 'I'm weak,' and then remain so"

Quite honestly, I can't imagine how anyone can say, "I'm weak," and then remain so. After all, if you know it, why not fight against it; why not try to train your character? The answer was: "Because it's so much easier not to!" This reply rather discouraged me. Easy? Does that mean a lazy, deceitful life is an easy life? Oh no, that can't be true, people can so easily be tempted by slackness... and by money."

In this quote we can see Anne questioning and asking, 'why?' She has very strong moral values, and cannot understand when people just take the easy option. And yet, her obedience is equally strong, as she writes later in the same entry:

"People who have a religion should be glad, for not everyone has the gift of believing in heavenly things. You don't necessarily even have to be afraid of punishment after death; purgatory, hell and heaven are things a lot of people can't accept, but still a religion, it doesn't matter which, keeps people on the right path. It isn't the fear of G-d but the upholding of one's own honour and conscience."

I feel Anne is right. Religion is a good thing, be it Judaism or another religion. It is something that keeps you going forwards, and stops you giving in. Whether Judaism is the very centre of your life, or one thing amongst many that matter, it helps you and encourages you to do something with your life. For me, both the idea of obedience to basic moral rules, yet also the questioning that is fundamental to Judaism, are central to the upholding of one's own honour and conscience.

Shabbat Shalom

Rose Orgel

I did not have a Bat Mitzvah and in no way did I ever feel deprived, but when David started talking about his second Bar Mitzvah I thought well perhaps I should mark what should be my second Bat Mitzvah and also make a thanksgiving to God for having reached this stage.

"women have always played a strong part in our history"

I am not a feminist, but I do not believe

women to be second class citizens and we can indeed go hand in hand with the men, perhaps not physically, but certainly mentally, and so for my Dvar Torah, I have pinpointed some notable Jewish women throughout the ages, because women have always played a strong part in our history.

Starting with Eve, without whom, of course, there would be no history. Then our four Matriarchs, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, who laid, and I use the word reservedly, the foundation to our becoming a Nation.



At a time when there was no 'Women's' Lib., and indeed when other nations enslaved their women, the Jewish woman was already ranked amongst our Poets, Judges and Prophets.

In the Book of Judges, we read of Deborah who was a noted teacher and

poet. When hearing of the terrible conditions under which some of her people lived, she went to them and, together with a famous warrior of the times called Barak, led them to fight and defeat their enemies; the Canaanites.

Remember too, Miriam, who watched over Moses in the bulrushes, and by so doing saved his life.

Ruth, who, rather than going back to her own people, the Moabites, on the death of her husband, decided to stay with his people and so became the first convert to Judaism and indeed was the ancestor of King David.

Then let us not forget Esther, who, because of her beauty, became Queen to King Ahasuarus. Her reign, together with her plea to the King, saved the Jewish people from Haman's desire to destroy them.

In more recent times a heroine of World

War 2 was a young girl called Hannah Senesh, born in Budapest, Hungary in 1921, her father died when she was six years old and she lived with her mother and brother. In 1939 she emigrated to what was then Palestine where she studied Agriculture. Her diary tells us of her concern over what was happening in Europe and, after joining the Army, she went to Britain to offer her services in fighting against fascism. In 1944 she was parachuted into Yugoslavia, where her task was to join the Partisans. Her main objective was to persuade the Partisans to cross the border into Hungary in order to rescue Jews from the extermination camps. She was, however, captured by the German army soon after arriving in Yugoslavia and was tortured by them for several months before being executed in Budapest in November 1944. She was just 23 years old. She never did fulfil her ambition to become a poultry-farming instructor in what was to become the State of Israel.

Perhaps the most famous Jewish woman of our times was Golda Meir who read the Declaration of Independence to the people of the new State of Israel in 1948. She became the first Israeli Ambassador to Russia and then to the United Nations and finally was a most inspiring first woman Prime Minister of Israel.

To this day, in every community we have strong-minded women who have the ability and willingness to take charge when required.

Here in Edinburgh, we have many women who work very hard in helping to enhance the vibrancy of our Jewish way of Life.

To quote from the Book of Proverbs nos. 10 and 31, "Who can find a virtuous woman for her price is far above rubies... give her the fruits of her hands and let her own works praise her in the Gates".

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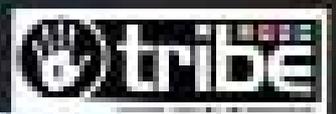
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The Merchant of Venice – Much Ado About Nothing?

Sharon Thompson

I have to say I thought twice about going to the Lyceum's 2006 October production of Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice. I am a Christian with Jewish friends in America, Israel and now here in Scotland too. The aftermath of the Hezbollah-Israeli conflict was still prominent in the news. There had been a steady rise in attacks on Jews and synagogues in the UK, including Scotland, and there was the controversy over the Lyceum's choice of advertising for the play. It had been fifteen years since I had last seen The Merchant of Venice. Was it inappropriate to want to see it at such a time? Was the play being staged in an anti-Semitic way? Was the play itself anti-Semitic? These questions were in the back of my mind as I decided to book my ticket.



“and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?”

My understanding of the controversy surrounding the production was that it was regarding the choice of costume for the character, Shylock. Dressed as a modern Orthodox Hasidic Jew, the figure pictured in advertising posters was stereotypical and contemporary, a dubious combination in connection with such a provocative play. However it was not until I was approached to write this article that I was made aware that it was the legend accompanying the picture of Shylock ‘...and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?’ that had raised the greatest concern and anger within the Edinburgh and Scottish Jewish community.

Undoubtedly decisions about costuming and advertising would have been made well in advance of promotion and staging. That it proved ill-timed in the light of events in the Middle East and the often anti-Israeli attitude predominant in the media was unfortunate. It is true as the Lyceum

spokeswoman responded in The Scotsman, that the chosen quotation is one of the most important in the play. Identifying these words with the production for purposes of advertising are valid academically and artistically. On reflection, however, the quotation of revenge does provoke certain responses regardless of the timing of the production.

For myself I have always seen Shakespeare's portrayal of Shylock as largely sympathetic towards the historically maligned Jewish figure. This Jewish character suffers unprovoked slurs and attacks and when an unrepentant enemy asks to borrow money from him - money-lending being considered one of the evils of Jewish culture as opposed to the predominant Christian Venetian culture of the play - his revenge, albeit horrific, seems justified. At the time I thought the chosen quotation a little thoughtless considering current circumstances - I don't know if I am typical in this respect. But seeing the play again after so long and confronted with the strong feelings expressed by some in the Jewish community, I have begun to feel more strongly.

As Selwyn Dorfman, a reader of the Jewish Chronicle, and Hilary Rifkind, chairman of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation, both pointed out, the idea of revenge conveyed by the advertising posters outside of the play in contemporary society must be acknowledged as having a less subtle impact on a greater number of people who may never see the play - people who may make judgements influenced by the strongest voices in their communities, and who are fed selective information about Jews and Israel by the media. In the poster the character of Shylock with the caption about revenge holds the danger of representing all Jews to the public. Considering the historic propaganda on which Shakespeare relied for his creation of a Jew in Venice, and sadly still evident today in some sections of society and even in our modern media,

it is not difficult to understand the sensitivity of the Jewish community towards what might be perceived as an unwitting transference of that same propaganda into our local contemporary sphere.

We only need to reflect on the effect an alternative stereotypical figure with a similar caption might have to begin to understand the strong feelings this issue has provoked. A Christian crusader say, in place of Shylock... The effect however, is compounded by the minority status of the Jewish community locally and worldwide. Their endurance under the threat of the ever-bubbling cauldron of anti-Semitism is something those of us in the wider community have perhaps taken for granted. I don't think anyone would accuse the Lyceum of deliberate offence, but having been alerted to the offence genuinely felt, I am surprised that there appears to have been not even a token apology, only artistic defence of the choice of advertising. It must be said that the programme for the play did not replicate the posters. The various pictures of Shylock throughout were accompanied by the play's title or explanations about the play which would have served the posters just as well, avoiding any potential for misunderstanding and leaving any ideas about the character or the play open-ended.

“To become too tolerant can, as history has shown, have devastating results”

There seems to have been debate within the wider Jewish community and media over whether the negative response was justified. Surely decent people would agree that over-the-top political correctness should never deter any from publicly voicing concerns or feelings of disquiet, though unfortunately this prevailing tendency does dilute genuine complaints. There was no political agenda to this negative response to the Lyceum's

advertising. The grievance was purely responsive. Should the Jewish community have kept silent? To become too tolerant can, as history has shown, have devastating results. Even through such an incident as this, where no malevolence was purposefully intended, insensitivity can be just as hurtful and potentially damaging. If communities lose the ability to empathise, or at least sympathise with, the feelings of a people who have historically suffered under what can only be called a world-wide phenomenon of sustained, unprovoked animosity and attack, then tolerance is exposed for the cold word it has become.

As to the play itself, seeing it again after fifteen years was something of a surprise for me. Jimmy Chisholm's performance as Shylock was sincere, heart-rending stuff. As a modern audience member I was shocked though by Shakespeare's ultimate treatment of Shylock. Antonio spares Shylock's life but what life is he left with, denied his daughter, money, justice, and even forced to deny his faith? He is, in essence, eternally condemned. There is no heart-felt forgiveness evident. This attitude of cruel triumph (even revenge?) of Christianity over Judaism still has a poignant relevance today in the spiritual divide which remains between these two children of the same root of faith.

The Merchant of Venice is an important play which dares to explore delicate and complex issues still relevant today. There was no appeal for the play itself to be banned, just a call for a bit of consideration. I don't think that's too much for the Jewish community to ask of any of us.

When I recently visited the Edinburgh Lyceum to see 'The Merchant of Venice', I was rather glad to be going on my own rather than with my usual local group, as this production had initiated too much adverse controversy and news coverage.

The anti-Semitic content of this play is always present, but in this instance, I detected little sympathy towards Shylock who was cast in a bullying, aggressive role.

I personally considered this an uninspiring production, with indifferent acting, and an unattractive stage setting and which was poorly costumed, particularly Jessica, whose red outfit resembled that of a trapeze artist and seemed deliberately provocative.

Nevertheless, the vast majority of the audience appeared to be enjoying the evening hugely, but I can't help feeling concerned about the discriminatory impression conveyed, of Shylock and his race, which must have been absorbed by the many school groups present.

Eve Oppenheim

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Society Reports

Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society

On Translating Amos Oz

Avery Meiksin

The Lit was delighted to open its 119th season with a talk given by Nicholas de Lange, Professor of Hebrew and Jewish Studies at Wolfson College, Cambridge, who spoke "On translating Amos Oz." He began by speaking on the nature of translation generally, then treated the audience to readings from some of his translations of Oz's recent works. Following the readings was a lengthy period of discussion, including some entertaining anecdotes of his working relationship with Oz.

Translation, Prof. de Lange emphasised, is more than knowing two languages. It shares much in common with the craft of writing, in word choice and expression. Unlike a writer, a translator is both a reader and a writer. He or she serves two masters, the author and the reader. The skill of a translator can dramatically alter the reception of a book. There are both superb and miserable translations of the works of Tolstoy and Dostoevski, with renderings having hardly the same appeal.

Prof. de Lange met Amos Oz at a meeting of translators in Greece more than thirty years ago. At the time Oz had written only one obscure novel about Crusaders. Prof. de Lange's translation so delighted Oz, particularly for the touch of its classical-sounding rendition, as if it had been translated from Latin. As it turned out, Prof. de Lange was trained in the classics, translating from Greek and Latin. He didn't mention this to Oz, who soon offered Prof. de Lange his most famous novel for translation, "My Michael".

Very few books were translated into English at the time, a trend common to many small countries with superb writers of whom English speakers learn very little, if anything. Translating from the Hebrew has its own difficulties. Hebrew words are sometimes very general, remarkably so sometimes. For example, in one novel, Oz refers to a woman taking a dog for

a walk. Prof. de Lange insisted that the English-speaking reader would want to know what kind of dog. Oz had an idea - a poodle - but there is no Hebrew word for it, and no need to be so specific for the Hebrew reader.

At least once, in the translation of "My Michael", Oz added a paragraph absent in the Hebrew edition. It was in fact a paragraph that the Hebrew publisher insisted be removed. To Oz's delight, Prof. de Lange liked the paragraph, and so the two restored it. Many years later, the publishing house of a small country produced its own translation of the novel. The missing paragraph was there. Prof. de Lange knew then the translator must have worked from his English translation, but did not acknowledge him or offer him a royalty. He complained, not asking for a royalty, but at least an acknowledgment. The publisher was indignant, claiming the translator had worked from the Hebrew original. Prof. de Lange asked him about the added paragraph. He never heard from the publisher again.

Many years after Prof. de Lange's first encounter with Oz at the translators' meeting, he confessed to Oz that he had had hopes of meeting a young female Greek academic, with whom he'd explore the Greek isles and recite poetry while sipping wine on the beach. Meeting a young aspiring Israeli writer was the last thing he expected. Oz disappeared to another room of his house on hearing this, and reappeared with a bottle of Ouzo. Oz continues to be pleased with Prof. de Lange's translations, making Prof. de Lange his exclusive translator into English. Prof. de Lange's most recent renditions, from which he read to the Lit, are the challenging "Same Sea," a novel that is more poetry than prose, and Oz's autobiographical "A Tale of Love and Darkness."



St Andrew's Jews

Anthony Gilbert

On November 12th Rabbi Rose gave a talk to the Lit entitled 'St Andrew's Jews: attitudes to Jews in the Church of Scotland'.

While he has been in Edinburgh, Rabbi Rose has studied for an MA degree. Following completion of the MA, he had looked for further material and found much of relevance to Jews within the Church of Scotland; it was about his findings there that he spoke to the Lit.

The historical backdrop to his thesis is as follows. Around the 1840's the Church of Scotland developed an extensive mission to the Jews. It had been decided that it was necessary to convert Jews without delay and so a

large effort was made, which included the creation of missions in Tiberias, Smyrna, Alexandria, Budapest and also Glasgow and Edinburgh. Rabbi Rose's interest was in the attitudes that shaped this mission and how they have developed since then. He found some material on this in the General Assembly Reports: a whole section of the Church was responsible for the Church's attitude to the Jews, and this reported to the General Assembly. But the most fruitful place to find attitudes to Jews was within the pew pamphlets: each week a pamphlet on a given theme was placed in pews in churches throughout Scotland. Their purpose was to inform church members and also to raise support, in particular financial support, for certain activities. Where the Jews were concerned, the pew pamphlets were essentially propaganda aimed at

convincing churchgoers to give money to the cause of converting Jews. The pamphlets offer snap-shots of the Church's attitude towards Jews in relation to a number of issues at various times since the 1840's.

For many years after 1840, the attitude to the Jewish religion was one of dislike, typical of the general attitude of the times. Adjectives 'debased', 'heinous' are to be found in the pamphlets, and the general view of the religion was that it was legalistic and superstitious. Reform Judaism was found to be less intolerable, being 'a stepping stone to Christianity'. The Church felt concern at the lack of faith among many Jews, and considered that the only remedy for this was conversion.

A similar attitude permeated their attitude to Jewish people, particularly in

the earlier part of the period considered; again the pew pamphlets reveal objections to the Jewish people themselves, describing 'their foxy ways' and voicing other complaints. But later, the Jews found support among the Church, and in the 1930's the Church was active in combating anti-Semitism. It was the Rabbi's view that this change came with the First World War. Jews were seen to fight alongside native Scots, and this engendered a reappraisal of Jews and changed the Church's relationship towards them; indeed, pamphlets of this era actually countered a widely held belief that the Jews had not helped the war effort.

The Church felt a particular concern towards the Jews in the matter of secularisation. Based on an extraordinary set of premises, including the Book of Esther and the Russian Revolution, it felt that Jews, especially non-religious ones, posed a great danger to the Christian Church and

that Jews were destroying Christian life. During the 1930's the Church was very worried about its loss of influence among the general populace, and blamed the Jews for this.

The attitude towards Zionism was ambivalent and continues to be so to this day, indicating differing opinions within the Church. The initial reaction was negative; the 'solution' was conversion, not a homeland, and the Church was also concerned about its interests in Palestine. They also worried that Zionism would revive Judaism, and thus be a threat to world-wide Christianity. There were, however, positive attitudes also: the return of the Jews to Israel fulfilled a prophetic promise, and after the Holocaust, much greater sympathy was expressed for a national home for the Jews.

Between 1900 and 1950, there was a change of attitude towards Jews from one of conversion to one of greater

understanding. Interfaith began in Glasgow in the 1950's; by the 60's, reports to the General Assembly on Jews, once prepared by the Missionary Board, were prepared by the Home Board; by 1967, the General Assembly had rejected missionary activity and instead sought greater dialogue with the Jewish Community. This marks the broad trend to this day though the Rabbi felt that there had been something of a hiatus most recently.

The Rabbi fielded a range of questions after his talk; mild amusement was caused by his reply that for all its efforts, the Church's attempts to persuade Jews to convert had met with conspicuous lack of success.

The Rabbi's talk had touched on matters of great local interest, and while he himself said that his findings were perhaps not all that surprising, the investigation was novel, and his thesis delivered with his customary ebullient style.

Turning towards Jerusalem? – Jews and the Holocaust in German Protestant Theology

Charles Raab

The reconstruction of German Protestant post-Holocaust theology was the subject of Dr. Hanna Holtschneider's well-attended talk to the Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society ('the Lit') on 10th December 2006. Dr Holtschneider, who holds the new post of Lecturer in Modern Judaism in the University of Edinburgh's School of Divinity, has written authoritatively on this subject of great significance for Christians and Jews. Her talk explained the ferment in German Protestant thinking as theologians have tried to re-examine their faith in the light of the Holocaust and of the centrality of the Jewish people and Jewish life to Christian beliefs and to Christian self-understanding. The laying of a new biblical foundation for Christian theology is a project that attempts to resolve the unprecedented moral crisis in German Protestantism as a result of the Holocaust. Concentrating on probably the most distinguished of these theologians, Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt (1928-2002), Dr. Holtschneider offered a critical analysis of his writings that focus upon Christian-Jewish relations at the level of systematic theology.



His new theological effort represented a turning-away from the historically negative Christian understanding of the persistence of Jewish life, which challenged Christianity itself, and towards a recovery of the 'biblical order of reality'. She argued that this, for Marquardt, was defined by the relationship between the Jewish people and God as narrated in the sacred texts and enacted historically. His claim was that this relationship must inform not only Christians' relationship with God, but their relationship with Jews as well. The church's failure to stop the Holocaust meant that the essence of Christianity itself had also been under attack: for Marquardt, she explained, the future of God is intrinsically bound to the life of

His people. Marquardt therefore saw the necessity of understanding Bible from the perspective of Jews as the victims of traditional Christian interpretations; thus his theology was a kind of repentance as it confronted the crisis of Christian faith. This led Marquardt to develop the idea of an 'Evangelical Halachah', close to, but distinct from, Jewish Halachah in that it is founded on the leadership of Jesus Christ, but controversial in the danger it posed of treating Jewish tradition in an imperialistic and Christianising manner. Marquardt went back to the Abrahamic story, and its continuity in Jewish history and experience, as a paradigm for a new Christian concept of their relationship with God and thus as a path to the reconstruction of Christian-Jewish relations.

Hanna Holtschneider saw Marquardt's theology as a courageous attempt to confront the theological consequences of the Holocaust, and to overcome anti-Semitism in Christian theology. However, she criticised this project, first, because it failed to understand Jewish self-understandings, and even secularity, which may differ from those that are ascribed to Jews by Christians who cannot recognise the identity of Jews beyond their role as witnesses to the kind of relationship with God that Christians need to learn. Christian reconstruction thus overshadowed a need to acknowledge Jews' experiences and their differing interpretations of the Holocaust. Second, she argued that the possibilities for practical Jewish-Christian interaction in contemporary Germany are limited and often evade issues of the Holocaust and of Jewish self-understandings. A final point in Dr. Holtschneider's thought-provoking talk was that these theological writings do not examine the Holocaust in specific detail, whilst taking it on a general and cosmic level as evil. They fail to examine concrete Jewish experiences and memories, or to compare these with the German obliteration of Jewish history and the falsification of memory.

The Believer

Judy Gilbert

On the recommendation of Rabbi Rose, who admitted to seeing the film four times, a number of members of the Literary Society went along to the Film House on the 3rd December, to see 'The Believer'. This challenging film with unusual subject matter, based on a true story, addressed the dilemmas of a young orthodox Jewish man who decided to embrace Nazism. Rabbi Rose chaired the discussion that followed the film, which initiated some interesting observations and speculations as to the reason for the young man's 'hard to fathom' behaviour. The film had also attracted members of the non-Jewish public who were surprised and happy to join in the discussion.

The Film House have very kindly informed the Society of films of Jewish interest for a number of years and although I was at first reluctant to watch yet another film, which I presumed was of Holocaust education, it transpired not to be so and I was drawn into it more and more. It would be inappropriate to say I enjoyed it, but would still recommend The Believer for its interesting and thought provoking theme.



Reviews Over Exposure by Hugo Rifkind

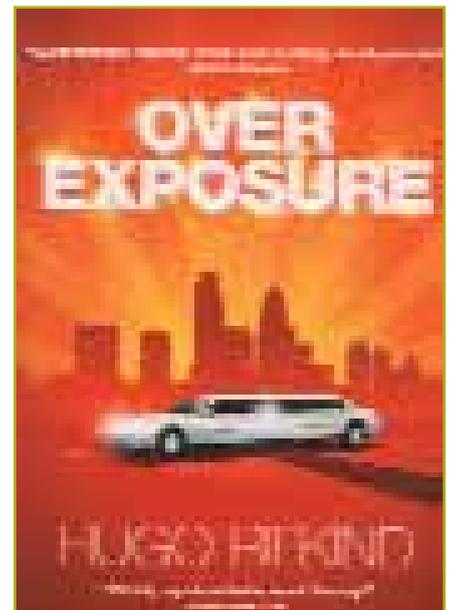
Janet Mundy

I should have been warned by the inscription inside my borrowed copy of this book – "To Hilary – please skip the rude bits"! At first I thought this would leave me precious little to read – linguistically, opening this book is like stumbling on a script of The Sopranos or waiting for a bus with a group of ladettes, so profuse were the profanities. However, I don't think respectable middle-class ladies are the target audience for this novel, although it did feel rather like opening one's offspring's diary and being profoundly shocked at what was inside, while not daring to ask its author whether it's all true.

When Hugo spoke to the community during the Edinburgh Festival this summer, he did allude to the question of whether the novel was autobiographical. After all, Macaulay Lewis, the narrator, is Jewish, Scottish and works in London as a journalist, like Hugo himself. However, he pointed out that he wrote the novel before he started writing his Times column. And Macaulay's ex-alcoholic father definitely does not resemble Malcolm Rifkind in any way (although he does run a kit outfitters!).

The plot of the novel concerns Fingers, a latter-day Raffles who steals

valuables at celebrity events. Macaulay is a peripheral presence at these shindigs, supposedly to report for his newspaper. This gives him ample opportunity to namedrop, and many chapters are full of lists of real 'celebs' – Graham Norton, Jamie Oliver, Noel Gallagher, Claudia Schiffer, and many others that I hadn't heard of. It soon becomes obvious which are the fictional characters, as these are described in detail. In the early stages of the novel, the main fascination is the appalling lifestyle of Macaulay and his media pals, involving casual sex, drugs, drink and an extremely cavalier attitude to work. As the book progresses and the shock value diminishes, the story itself starts to emerge from the tabloid-style descriptions, generating a genuine page-turner. Macaulay, usually in a drug-induced haze, literally stumbles upon discoveries about the involvement of various friends and colleagues in Fingers' crimes and gradually unravels the mystery. Throughout the novel, he fantasises about who would play himself in a story of his life, starting with Jude Law ("about as Semitic as a bacon crucifix"), showing that he is totally self-absorbed, and obsessed by the media hyperbole that surrounds him. I found myself profoundly hoping that



this is satire, and not a true picture of how young Edinburgh Jews conduct themselves in London. Without giving away the ending, there is the suggestion of redemption, much to my relief – no one could live without a decent night's sleep or a home-cooked meal for that long!

Perhaps the best recommendation for this book is not to read it yourself, but lend it to your twenty-something sons and daughters, and watch their faces carefully as they read, for signs of a guilty conscience! I expect many of them would thoroughly enjoy it, and take it as the light-hearted exposé of a trivia-obsessed media that is intended, and an entertaining romp.

Honours

Honorary Life President – Mickey Cowen Ian Shein

The January 2001, edition 38 of the "Edinburgh Star" highlighted the tremendous contribution made by Mickey and Carole Cowen to the Jewish and non-Jewish communities in Edinburgh. With regards to the former, when Mickey was asked his thoughts on the future of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation, he then stated, "there may have to be a different format. Consideration could be given to the utilisation of both religious and secular expertise within the community to provide additional practical and financial advice for its long term future". These prophetic words materialised six years later when the new Board of Management was created to replace the system which had been in existence for the past 70 years. He laughed at mention of his "psychic attributes" and stated "one has to have more output, as a smaller congregation has problems finding expertise and requires talent, both religious and non-religious, from its members. Within the new system we can incorporate these talents. One must remain optimistic and positive. We can offer a great deal to the life of Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation and we are fortunate in having a great communal spirit".

Mickey's repetition of optimism and positiveness coloured his thoughts when interviewed on his appointment as Honorary Life President of the Congregation. This attitude prevailed during many year's service in executive office, where the inevitable problems and crises were overcome by sheer determination and foresight. He quoted his late father's philosophy when the latter was President "of not rushing into things.... but once a decision has been made, make sure that decision is followed through".

Mr. I.G. Cowen, fondly known as I.G., spent a lifetime of devoted service to the Synagogue and on completion of his term in the executive was elected Honorary Life President, this prestigious position becoming vacant

on his death in 1997. He believed the smallness of the community helped develop a special closeness and that the individual strengths of members could be harnessed. It was important that young members be encouraged to participate in running the community. I.G.'s greatest pleasure was when he saw his son elected President. "My father had considerable influence on me; in particular I recall his decisive leadership. His constant interest in the Synagogue followed him home and we often discussed current affairs. When I joined the executive I received so much encouragement from him. He took the office of Life President very seriously, his great experience derived from having held all offices on Council. The fact that it has taken nine years for a successor to be named shows the tremendous respect he had within the community".

In reply to the question on his role as Honorary Life President, a situation unique, where a son follows his father, Mickey replied "I was delighted, and when I was invited, I looked upon it as a great honour. Carole's agreement and enthusiasm were major factors in my acceptance. Perhaps it is rather early to define my own role. It really is a dormant office granted in recognition of past service to the community but it is nice to be invited to Synagogue meetings and our chairman appears to be receptive to new ideas". Asked if the office would give him a more objective view of Synagogue management he replied, "We have an excellent team of office bearers and I would be pleased to be behind the scenes and join conveners in any relevant discussion and perhaps represent the Congregation in any sphere if required. Like my father I believe that one can offer support without encroaching on authority. For example in the media, commentators whether in politics, entertainment or sport use previous practical experience to express themselves appropriately".

The AGM of the Synagogue in June 2006 saw a radical change in the management of the Congregation. Generally the Edinburgh Jewish community is traditional in outlook and do not encourage change. What did he think? "My first reaction was that we do not need physical change, what we need is more personnel to actively participate. We are fortunate in that we are financially stable. However membership in most provincial

communities is in the decline and this is borne out by census. We are starved of the talent of youth but there is no doubt we will continue as an entity. So many people have given time and energy. We have impressive leadership and this will surely encourage a good team to respond well. The secular/religious divide appears to be operating smoothly although certain practicalities, of which the Board is aware, have to be addressed. I find the atmosphere at Synagogue meetings efficient, if less formal than in previous years".

Regarding declining membership, Mickey stated, "50 years ago when a prominent leader of the community died, congregants went round intoning 'we're doomed' like Private Frazer of Dad's Army. Ten years ago similar comments were heard.... we're still here. Of course as stated previously we could do with more young people; newcomers would be a great asset. Interestingly enough a number of congregants tend to be more observant. In years gone by members were in business; many now are professional or academic".

Years ago with regards to the community's future, Mickey's father believed it was time to move on. Our new Honorary Life President shares similar thoughts and has every confidence in the new management. He also shares the sentiments of I.G. that there should be dignity in his new office. He summed up "everyone is a beneficiary due to that and this elevates both the position and the community".

In his obituary of Mr. I.G. Cowen, the late Dr. Nate Oppenheim wrote, "He was Honorary Life President, a position which sadly now falls vacant and which we will find hard to fill with a man of equal worth, dignity and devotion".

In Mickey Cowen, Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation is indeed fortunate to have found such a man.



Golden Veteran Badge

Ida Skubiejska was awarded the Golden Veteran Badge for service in World War 2 in the rank of subaltern of the ATS.

The following letter accompanied the award:



'With the compliments of the Under Secretary of State for Defence and Minister for Veterans.

This HM Armed Forces Veteran's Badge is presented to you in recognition of your service to your country.

You may wish to wear it on suitable occasions when dressed in civilian attire.'

Ministry of Defence, Whitehall

Portrait of Lady Hazel Cosgrove



A full-sized portrait of Lady Hazel Cosgrove hangs in the Advocates Reading Room of the Scottish Parliament. The Faculty commissioned Irvine artist, David Reid, to paint the portrait to mark her contribution to the Law and her recent retirement from the Bench.

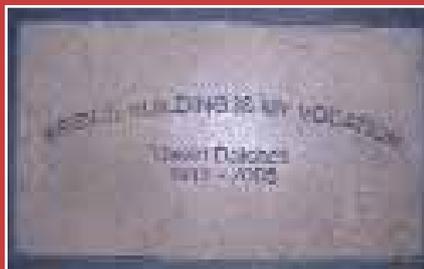
The portrait was based on a series of photographs of Lady Cosgrove, who was admitted to the Faculty in 1968. She became the first woman to be appointed as a High Court and Court of Session judge in Scotland, firmly rejecting the idea that she should be addressed as "Your Lordship".

She told The Scotsman: "I have just been in the right place at the right time, part of a generation of women for whom there have been no barriers and, provided they have been prepared to put in the time and the effort, have been able to reach the heights in their chosen profession."

David Reid, who works from a studio in Irvine, is a self-taught artist who has painted full-time since his first exhibition in 2004.

Commemorative stone to honour David Daiches Sidney Caplan

David Daiches has been posthumously honoured with a stone tablet at the Writers' Museum in the courtyard at Lady Stairs House, down Lady Stairs Close, situated on the Royal Mile.



This honour has been given to Scottish writers' such as Nigel Tranter and Nell Dunn.

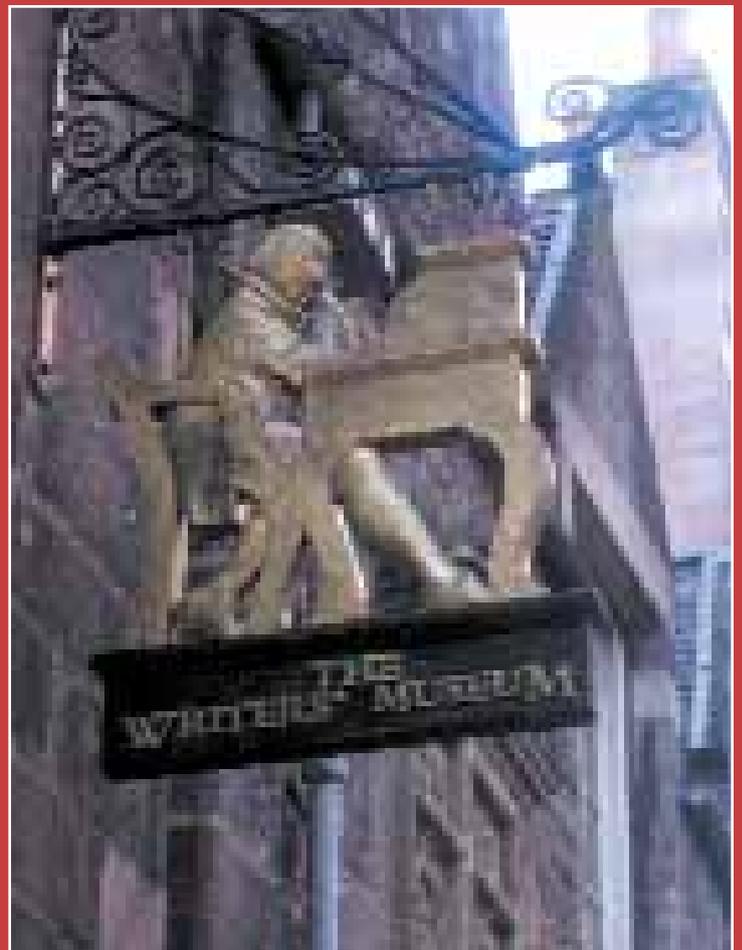
The museum concentrates on Robert Burns, Sir Walter Scott and Robert Louis Stevenson.

David Daiches is the first Jewish writer to be acknowledged in this way; this honour has been given in recognition of his writing on Scotch Whiskey and Robert Burns as well as his famous book "Two Worlds".



Among his many other titles David Daiches wrote about Milton and Willa Cather.

His obituary can be found in the October 2005 edition of "The Edinburgh Star".



Viviane Furst (née Joseph)

11/01/21 – 6/9/2006

Viviane Joseph was born in Hampstead, London, the third and youngest child of Stanley Joseph and Germaine Joseph (née Salamon).

Her mother, Germaine, was French and had lived in Paris before her marriage. Germaine had two sisters, Magite and Kiki. Magite had been a nurse during the First World War on the front line, and in recognition of her services to France she was awarded the highest civilian honour, the Légion d'honneur. Kiki married a French engineer, Jean Mariotti, a pioneer of the French air force in the First World War and a spy in Russia during the Second World War.

Viviane had several severe illnesses as a child and as a result missed a lot of schooling. She loved sports and in particular volleyball. She attended several schools, and on one occasion interviewed the headmistress herself to make sure the school met her requirements!

As a child, Viviane, her older sister Claudine and her brother Gerald would spend the summer holidays in France. (Gerald subsequently joined the RAF, flying 22 missions over Germany and was one of only six of his squadron to survive the war.) She was quick to learn the language and became fluent in French, using this skill throughout her life.

Once she finished school, Viviane began work in the office of a French couture dress shop in London. However, she decided office work was not for her and trained as a chiropodist.

Shortly after qualifying, war broke out and despite her parents' protests, she qualified as a nurse at University College Hospital in London. Her ability to speak French was again useful when she was selected to nurse wounded French soldiers.

Her parent's marriage broke up when she was a teenager and her mother remarried Saul ("Pop") Stungo and moved to Edinburgh. It was when

Viviane went to visit her mother, who lived in Thirlestane Road, that she met Herbert Furst who also lived on the same street. They married on 24th September 1943 in Edinburgh and had two children, Susan and Stephen.

It was a sign of the times that although she was entitled to train as a doctor, by virtue of excellent marks for nursing, she gave up that opportunity following marriage. However, Viviane continued to use her nursing training by qualifying as a Red Cross examiner, working as a school nurse and nursing in the Eye Pavilion.

Mention should also be made of David and Adrian Stungo, the children of her sister, Claudine. (She had married Ellis Stungo, Pop Stungo's son.) The boys came to live in Edinburgh after Claudine's marriage ended, and during this time, together with her mother, Viviane took on the role of a caring, older sister.

Viviane later put her fluency in French to good use by tutoring children, and even organised a French school during the holidays, providing many children with the skill and enthusiasm for the language that she had discovered as a child. On occasions she was known to "barter" tuition fees in return for hairdressing.

Viviane's other interests were swimming and bridge. When she moved to Marchmont, she used her disability scooter to travel to Warrender Road Baths most days. This scooter gave her a new lease of life; she would even go up and down the Mound to shop in Princes Street, insisting on going on the road even when the traffic built up behind her!



Viviane was dogged by ill health for most of her life and she spent months in hospital following spinal surgery. However, she lived independently, continuing to teach French and enjoying her other interests following the death of Herbert in 1980. It was only after an unsuccessful hip replacement operation that she finally accepted that she required the level of nursing only available in a nursing home, where she received loving attention.

Viviane was a very kind and caring lady, always interested in her family and, when free of pain, revelled in the company of others.

She is sadly missed by her daughter, son, and her wider family.

Susan Strachan



Muriel Rose Brown

Muriel Rose Brown, nee Seftor, was 81 when she died, having been ill for 3 or 4 years. To the end, she was always happy, smiling and laughing, and no one ever saw her complain. The nurses and carers who looked after her thought she was terrific.

Many people in Edinburgh knew both her, and my father Philip, who very sadly passed away 21 years ago. She missed him a great deal, but always tried to remain part of the Community, visiting and shopping for those who couldn't get out and about, attending functions and of course entertaining in her beautiful garden, which was her pride and joy. She spent many hours working in it, and was justly happy when visitors came to look and admire.

My mother thought her family was the most important part of her life, and although both my sister and I moved south, she often came to visit us, and her grandsons, with whom, she formed a particularly close relationship as they grew older. Naturally she was proud of their achievements, but she also laughed and giggled with them for no reason other than for fun.

She was a very sociable person, and loved to be surrounded by friends with whom she would always keep closely in touch, but she was also well-known in Edinburgh for her sense of fashion - always up-to-date and chic, and looking fabulous. I couldn't compete, but she certainly passed her interest to one of her grandsons and would have loved to have been able to take him shopping as he grew older. They would have enjoyed the outings immensely, choosing items, commenting on each other's style, trying things on, both suggesting improvement, and she would probably have insisted on spoiling him with the purchase of something amazing. The boys will miss her sense of humour especially.

Her other passion in life was her dogs; only longhaired dachshunds, and mostly one at a time; they were treated as if part of the family. They were fed roast beef, taken everywhere so that they wouldn't feel lonely, and hugely loved and cared



for. Dogs belonging to her friends were given the same treatment.

My mother was a very caring person, who loved being in the company of others. There are many friends in Edinburgh and elsewhere, and of course her family, who miss her and can't really believe that she won't soon be on the telephone, to see how you are and find out about your day.

Jackie Neill

Editors note: Muriel was always deeply interested in the welfare of children and one of her activities was to assist Eve Oppenheim with the collection of donations towards the Jewish Child's day.

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With Compliments
from Judith Sischy

Compliments of
Maryla and
Edward Green

WHO THEY ARE ANSWERS:

Their identities are – Pearl and Ian Shein

Announcements

Congratulations

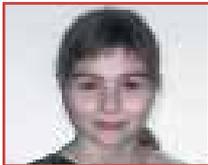
Joel Raffel

awarded BA (Hons)
1st Class in Medical
Sciences from the
University of Oxford.
He is now at Clinical
School at Oxford
(Green College).



Sarah Levy on
becoming Bat
Mitzvah
on Saturday 28th
October.

Jessica Spencer
on becoming Bat
Mitzvah on
Saturday 11th
November.



Jonathan Field on
becoming Bar
Mitzvah on
Saturday 25th
November.

**Isaac Ansell
Forsyth** on
becoming Bar
Mitzvah on
Saturday 23rd
December.



Thank you We thank all who attended our 50th Wedding Anniversary Luncheon and express our regrets that there were a few friends unable to attend. British Friends of Israel War Disabled benefited from your generosity to the sum of £970, as can be seen from the letters, here reproduced, together with a photograph of Israeli wounded given some brief respite away from danger. Other worthy causes also benefited from your generosity.

Our thanks for your very kind good wishes and to those kind friends who ignored our embargo on gifts. *Vicky and Tom Lowrie*

Dear Mr & Mrs Lowrie

Thank you so much for arranging for donations to be made to our charity on the occasion of your Golden Wedding Anniversary.

The magnificent sum of £970 has been raised before Gift Aid. I enclose a schedule of donors and a certificate to commemorate your anniversary. I understand from our conversation that you chose our charity from amongst all those advertised and we are extremely grateful

Our organisation was set up just after the Yom Kippur War in conjunction with the Zahal Disabled Veterans Organisation, to bring groups of severely injured soldiers to England to stay with caring families.

In the 32 years since then, we have hosted over 5,000 men and women. Groups have included paraplegic, blind, head injuries and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and the benefits of their trips have been amazing. Apart from this, BFIWD has bought a great deal of equipment for Belt Halochem (Centre for the Disabled Veterans).

We had certainly hoped that well before now, our help would not be needed for much longer, but unfortunately this has not been possible. Everyday still, soldiers are being killed and wounded, both in the cause of protecting their country and also in the very tough training that it is necessary for them to undertake. This year we are bringing over a further six Groups to Manchester, Birmingham, Edgware, Hendon, Kenton and Woodside Park. The cost of doing this is now extremely high and whilst the local committees raise some of the money, much more is needed to enable us to continue our work.

Thank you once again on behalf of Israel's War Disabled

Yours sincerely, Jayne Hantman, Administrator



Thank you Irene Hyams thanks all her dear family and friends for their kind enquiries, phone-calls, cards, good wishes and flowers received, following her recent operation. She is now convalescing at home.

Forthcoming Events

February

4 Sunday

Community Centre: Just a Jewish Minute – 7.30pm

11 Sunday

EJLS: Rabbi Mark Solomon; 'The secret light, Islamic influence on Jewish spirituality' – 8.00pm

19 Monday

Lodge Solomon – 7.00pm

March

1 Thursday

Fast of Esther

4 Sunday

Purim

11 Sunday

EJLS: David Mazower – 'Dreams of Glory 'The story of Whitechapel's Yiddish Opera House.' – 8.00pm

19 Monday

Lodge Solomon – 7.00pm

25 Sunday

EJLS: Oron Joffe – 'Hebrew and Aramaic – a Friendly Embrace'. – 8.00pm

April

3 Tuesday

First day Pesach

16 Monday

Lodge Solomon – 7.00pm

May

13 Sunday

EJLS: Short talk (subject TBA) and Annual General Meeting – 8.00pm

Senior Maccabi meets on Sunday evenings in members' homes. Contact Joanna and Ben Seckl for further information.

The Luncheon Club meets every Tuesday and Thursday 12.30pm.

All meetings take place in the Community Centre, Salisbury Road, unless otherwise stated. All are subject to alteration.